broken, an appropriate signal would be received by the central station **12**. Another check to be made is whether the sum of the ascending and descending registers equals the control sum. If any indication of tampering is received, a message would be sent to the memory **18** and the meter **30** would be disabled upon command of the processor **14**. A print out would show all the postage meters **30** that did not pass the electronic inspection and each of these would be physically inspected. Additionally, the fact that a physical inspection was required for a meter would be stored in the memory **18** so that if a large number of inspections were required over a predetermined period, the meter **30** could either be replaced or the user questioned as to the reason for the frequency of such physical inspection requirement.

Referring now to FIG. **2**, an alternate embodiment of the invention will be described. A central station **40**, which again may be either a Post Office or a postage meter manufacturer, includes a computer data base **42** which stores the postage meter information, a printer station **44** and a scanner **46**. Periodically, the computer data base **42** will cause the printer station **44** to send a mail piece such as a post card **47** to one of a number of customer or user locations **48**. The post card **47** would be received by the postage meter user and a postage indicia would be printed by the user's postage meter **50**. The user's postage meter **50** would be programmed so that any tampering would be sensed by sensors **36** and these sensors would send an appropriate signal to the memory **52**. In response to these signals, the memory **52** would cause alterations in the postage indicia, each alteration being indicative of a particular sensor. Postage meters having printers capable of variable printing and capable of producing an altered indicia are shown and described in commonly owned U.S. Pat. Nos. 4,641,346 and 4,649,266. The alterations in the pattern of printing by the postage meter **50** are referred to as "tells". A "tell" may be a modified indicia, number, letter, bar code and the like. The postage meter **50** would print a postage indicia with "tells" if any sensor **36** indicated that tampering had taken place or if the sum of the ascending and descending registers did not equal the control sum. The post card **47** printed with the appropriate postage indicia would then be returned to the central station **40** and scanned by the scanner **46**. If the scanner **46** finds that there has been any tampering, this would be communicated to the computer data base **42** and the central station operator would cause a physical inspection to take place. If no inspection is required, this would also be communicated to the memory of the data base **42**.

What is claimed is:

1. A system for inspecting postage meters remotely, comprising:

a central station, at least one postage meter having a memory therein, means for placing said postage meter in direct communication with said central station, means for sensing postage meter tampering, means for storing in said memory acts of tampering whereby when said central station communicates with said meter said memory will send to said central station an indication of any tampering with said postage meter.

2. A system of claim **1** wherein said means for communicating is a mail piece.

3. A system for inspecting postage meters remotely, comprising:

a central station, at least one postage meter, said postage meter having a memory and a plurality of sensors in communication with said memory, each of said sensors associated with a component of said meter, said sensors generating a signal upon tampering with its respective component, means for placing said postage meter in communication with said central station, means for storing in said memory signals generated by said sensors, whereby when said central station directly communicates with said meter said memory will send to said central station a signal indicative of any tampering with said postage meter.

4. A system for inspecting postage meters remotely, comprising:

a postage meter having a memory therein, means for sensing postage meter tampering, means for storing in said memory acts of tampering and means for directly accessing said memory, whereby said memory will provide an indication of any tampering with said postage meter.

5. A postage meter adapted for remote inspection, comprising:

a postage meter having a memory, variable printing means and a plurality of sensors in communication with said memory, means for connecting each of said sensors with a component of said postage meter, whereby each of said sensors generates a signal upon tampering with its respective component, means for storing in said memory signals generated by said sensors, and means for causing the variable printing means to print an indicia with tells upon storage of said signals in said memory such that each of said tells is indicative of a sensor having detected tampering with said postage meter.

6. In a postage meter having a memory, the combination comprising:

means for sensing tampering with the meter;

means for setting a flag in the postage meter memory in response to said sensing means sensing meter tampering; and

access means associated with the postage meter for directly accessing said memory.

7. The postage meter of claim **6** including means for causing the postage meter to print tells in an indicia in response to the set state of the flag.

8. In a method of remotely inspecting a postage meter having a memory, the steps comprising:

sensing tampering with the postage meter;

setting a flag in the memory in response to the sensing of meter tampering; and

directly accessing the memory to determine if a tampering flag has been set.

9. In a method of remotely inspecting a postage meter having a memory, the steps comprising:

sensing tampering with the postage meter;

setting a flag in the postage meter memory in response to the sensing of meter tampering; and

printing with the postage meter an indicia having tells after said flag has been set in the memory.

10. The method of claim **9** including the steps of sending a mail piece from a central station to the user location of the postage meter, printing an indicia on the mail piece with the postage meter and returning the mail piece to the central station.

11. A system for inspecting postage meters remotely, comprising: